

# THE CORRESPONDENT.

*Magna est Veritas et Prevalebit.*

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## CORRESPONDENCE.

For the Correspondent.

### "REFUGE OF LIES."

*Mr. Editor.*—I send you a review of a sermon, preached at Ste-phentown, on the 13th inst. by the Rev. C. G. Finney, not because I consider him the best defender of the Christian creed, though he is unquestionably a man of talent, nor because I suppose that a refutation of his reasoning can be of important service to our cause; but as his manner is well calculated to affect the feelings of those who have not been accustomed to reflect deeply on subjects connected with religion, I have thought this discourse worthy a few reflections, addressed principally to such persons.

The text from which the Rev. gentleman preached, was this passage from the 28th chapter of Isaiah, "And the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies." That we may better understand this passage, it is necessary to remember, that in the second verse of this chapter it is said, "Behold the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which as a tempest of hail, as a destroying storm, as a flood of waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand." By this mighty and strong one, is meant the king of Assyria, who at the time Isaiah is supposed to have written, was about to fall upon Judea, and the neighbouring nations with his armies. In the 15th

verse, the prophet, speaking of the men that ruled in Jerusalem, says, "Because ye have said we have made a covenant with death, and with hell, we are at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come to us, for we have made lies our refuge, and behind falsehood have we hid ourselves." For this reason the prophet tells them, in the 17th verse, that the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. "And your covenant with death," says he, "shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand." We must here understand the prophet as speaking of the coming of the Assyrians; but the preacher understood him quite differently: he supposed that the lies of which the prophet spoke, were the excuses which men of the present day make for not becoming Christians; that the hail which was to sweep away the refuge of lies, was God's wrath; and the object of his sermon was to show what these lies are, to which sinners fly for refuge. The first of these, he said, was the denial of the truth of the Bible. It was probable that no one who ever fled to this refuge was present. None, he continued, fly to this in the present day, except such as have not examined the subject, or are incapable of examining it. None in the present day, who knew any thing of the evidence of the truth of the scriptures,

could doubt that they were the word of God, and those who did doubt this, had either wilfully shut their own eyes, and refused to examine the question, or they had not reason suitable for its examination. Of this assertion, I can only say, that Mr. Finney must have had good opportunities to know its falsehood; that the hail shall sweep away this refuge of lies by which Christians would defend their creed; that the time will come when reason shall prevail, when the naked characters of men who make such assertions, shall be held up to the view of mankind. On that day it shall be known, who in this question of the truth of the bible, have entrenched themselves behind falsehoods, and made lies their refuge.

The second lie, continued the Rev. gentleman, to which men fly for refuge, is a denial of the doctrines which the scriptures teach, while their divine character is acknowledged. A certain sect, said he, who acknowledge that the scriptures are from God, assert that they teach that all mankind will be saved. That all mankind will be saved! Can there be a more plain contradiction of common sense than this? Does not every person of common sense know that all mankind cannot be saved? The preacher then proceeded to show from scripture, that a part of mankind will be damned. Of his reasoning from this authority, I, of course, have nothing to say; and if by saying that common sense teaches that all mankind cannot be saved, he means that a common superficial examination of the subject teaches this, I shall not dispute it. But I can safely assert, that a thorough examination must teach us that there is no reason, under heaven, why any part of mankind should be punished after death. I know that ma-

ny will be astonished at this assertion; but if we are to be punished after death, what is it for? You reply—our crimes against God are sufficient to sink us to the lowest hell. But what have we done? Revolted against God. What law of God have we broken, or what law has God made that we can break? God, you reply, has commanded us to love him, and we have hated him. Indeed! And is this the cause of our damnation? Have we indeed hated God? What have we known of God? We must know God before we hate him; and what, I repeat, have we known, or do we know of his character? You reply we have seen him in his works; we have seen his glory in the things which he has created; we have seen him in the earth, which was fashioned by his hand; we have seen him in the things which are on the earth; we have seen his wisdom in the construction of our own bodies. All this is admitted. But the earth, and the things which are on it we love; the wisdom exhibited in the construction of our bodies, and in the other works of God, we admire. If then, we love and admire the works of God, can it be said that we hate him when we know him only by his works? We love every object of God's creation; we know God on'y as the creator of things which we love. Still it is said that we hate him. Does not every person see the absurdity of this? If we hated the world in which we are placed; if we hated the things that are on it, we might be said to hate God; but in loving God's works, we love all that we know of God; and as for his unknown character, we can neither love nor hate it.

But it will be said, that God has given us a revelation, in which his character is made known to man, and that we hate this revealed char-

acter of God. For the sake of argument we will suppose this to be true. What then? Are we to blame? Our hatred must arise either from some fault in God's revealed character, or from the badness of our taste. If there is any fault in God's revealed character, no one can suppose that we are to blame for it, and if our taste is bad, it is our misfortune, and not our fault. We did not create our own taste; it was born with us. We never sat down, and, after summing up the arguments on both sides, resolved that a certain object which before was disagreeable, should thence forward be agreeable; nor that things which before were agreeable, should forever after be disagreeable. It is a plain matter of experience, that our love, our hatred, our passions of every description, and the motives by which our conduct is governed, are not subject to the control of our will; and that, consequently, they cannot be the subjects of rewards and punishment. This is a truth, which every person, having but a slight acquaintance with the human mind, must acknowledge. All must know, that we do not create our own taste, but that it was made by the Being who made us, and that if our taste is bad, the fault, if any, must be attributed to our Maker, and not to ourselves. This would, indeed, be a strange world, if the taste, desires and passions, of man were subject to the control of his will. Man would be a strange animal if this were the case. It would be useless to threaten him with punishment, for, whatever you might inflict upon him, he could change his taste and make it agreeable. Should God threaten him with punishment for his crimes, he would reply "No matter, God, whatever you may inflict upon me, the same shall be agreeable, and I shall be

happy: be it what it will, I will change my taste, and I will love it. If you take me to heaven, I will love heaven; if you put me into hell, I will love hell. If you put me into the lake of brimstone and fire, from which the smoke ascendeth up towards heaven, it shall not harm me; the smell of sulphur shall be to me like that of sweet incense, and the tortures of my burning shall be agreeable. If you place me before your throne and compel me to worship you, I will love your worship; but if you place me before the throne of Satan, I will adore Satan, and be equally happy in worshiping him."

Let it then no longer be imagined that our love is subject to the control of our will, or that we deserve punishment for not loving God. For what then are we to be punished in a future life? Perhaps it will be answered, for not serving God. "For not serving God!" We will talk of serving God, and of performing our duty to him, when God shall stand in need of our assistance. When we have power to do God a favour, we will endeavour to serve him, and when we have power to do him an injury, we shall think it our duty to abstain from injuring him. But while we have power to do him neither good nor harm, we cannot conceive that we owe him any service. Suppose that we should now resolve to serve God, what should we do for him? What service has he for us to perform? Are we to till his lands, or to manufacture his cloths? Are we to build palaces for him, or are we to hoard up gold for his use?—Oh, no, is the reply; nothing of this; but when we engage in his service, our duty is to persuade others to serve him. Suppose that we do this, and that we win a hundred to his service, what are the whole hundred to do? Why let them go on and



persuade all mankind to serve God. Very well, we will suppose this to be done; what are all mankind to do for God when they have all resolved to serve him? Are they still to persuade others to serve God? Oh, no, there are no others for them to persuade. What are they to do then? Why, nothing! Much good then have we done God in winning them to his service. We have made all men God's servants, but God has no service for them to perform.—Suppose that we see a man riding through our streets, endeavouring to hire servants, and we ask him what labour he wishes his servants to perform? Oh, he replies, I have no labour for them to perform, but I want them to hire other servants. And when you have obtained servants enough what are they all to do?—Nothing. Should we not say that this man was mad; and is it not absurd to suppose that God acts in a similar manner?

(To be Continued.)

For the Correspondent.

#### A CHALLENGE.

Maria Cook, a female Universal preacher, of rather singular character, and at the same time, not deficient in shrewdness, a few years since preached by appointment in the village of —, in the western part of the state of New-York. A few days afterwards, it was given out that she would preach again on the following Sunday; which coming to the knowledge of the Baptist Clergyman, he challenged her to public disputation. This Maria declined; but varied her acceptance to the following terms: Each was to occupy the pulpit for half a day in succession, for the purpose of proving by scripture and argument, the grounds of their respective faiths.—

When Sunday came, the Rev. gentleman to whom the forenoon was assigned, made a bold and violent attack upon the creed of his opponent—rattled the whole sect well off, as the saying is; sent them all packing to hell, and locked the door upon them. In the afternoon, Maria made her appeal to the same audience, with something less assurance, but her scripture support was chosen with considerable judgment. Whether from the circumstance of her sex, or from her more intrinsically pleasing manner, or from the more flattering tenets of her discourse, certain it is, that the audience were not long in affording some indications, by which it might have been discovered that they were more favourable to her than to her opponent. At least, under a strong suspicion of this fact, the Rev. combatant left the house.

The next day the two champions met rather by accident. Well, Madam, said the Clergyman in rather a sarcastic manner, what luck in *fish-ing*? Tolerable luck, was the reply. Pray sir, what luck have you? Very little, madam, since you have come among us with your *delusive bait*.—I will tell you the reason, said Maria, with a smile: you take your *line* from the doctrine of original sin; your *hook* from predestination; and you bait with *partial* redemption: drawing these *up stream* you cry out loud enough to frighten the fish—"bite, or be damned!—bite or be damned!"

"Peter denies his Lord, and cries."  
*New England Primer.*

Although according to scripture, this was a heinous offence, yet Peter had time to think of his crime and to repent of his ingratitude—was forgiven and became a mighty Apostle; a favourite of heaven and the head

of the church. In this instance we have strongly exemplified the saying of scripture, that "God will have mercy on those he will have mercy." But Peter was a favoured child: not so Annanias and his wife, who in attempting to conceal a part of the amount of a certain sale of their real estate, which this same Peter, as head of the church, was to receive. "They barely denied, their *cash* and cried." Peter, who had experienced all the indulgence imaginable for a denial of his Lord and Saviour, as the story goes, rebuked Ananias and his wife so severely, that they fell down dead at his feet, merely for attempting to withhold a little money from his hands. I need hardly say with what complacency the good Christian reads this dispensation, nor how assuring and gratifying are all such instances to the clergy.—Here was the church and the spirit, with a witness. Whatever was condemned on earth was also condemned in heaven, with the most unrelenting severity. O, ye Ministers of obstinate and grudging flocks! Be sure that you hold up this instance in *terror* when your sheep stand before you at shearing time. You ought to have all the money, as God knows you delight to take such vile trash out of the hands of unskilful and ignorant holders.

LOOKER-ON.

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For the Correspondent.

#### THE MIRACULOUS CONCEPTION.

What a reasonless machine  
Can superstition make the reas'ner man!

Millar.

MR. EDITOR,—If feelings of commiseration and sympathy did not commingle with the emotions of the heart, when reflection unfolds to the eye of reason, how strangely superstition will pervert the most simple narrative of facts into meanings serviceable to suppositions, with which

such facts have not the remotest relation in truth—and how strangely it will delude the timid and thoughtless into beliefs, which are as groundless as they are, in reality, useless; laughter would certainly turn the sight to ridicule, and ridicule would persecute superstition with as little mercy as superstition now persecutes reason.

As an instance of unauthorised perversion of common sense, indebted solely to superstition for its support at the present day, if not for its origin also in days long since past; and as an instance of the kind, which would long ere this have sunk beneath the lash of ridicule, had not a decent respect for the opinions of others (a respect growing out of sympathy) interposed itself, I will direct the reader's attention to a consideration of the construction generally put upon the first chapter of the gospel of Matthew. It is invariably taught by our clergy, and superstitious credulity has influenced thousands and thousands to believe, that we have, in this chapter, conclusive proof, that Jesus was born of a *virgin*; that the writer himself, testifies to the fact, and confirms his testimony by a prophecy, which foretold the fact more than 500 years anterior to its occurrence. But the truth, probably is, the original writer of the book called Matthew, never testified to such a fact in his writings, nor adduced such a prophecy to confirm his statement of such a fact. If he did, the subtle perversion of the prophecy there adduced in confirmation of the statement, at once betrays a fraudulent design in the writer, and disproves the fact by impeaching the credibility of him who asserts it. Be this as it may—whether the original writer of the book asserted such a fact or not, or whether the assertion has been interpolated by another or

not, I undertake to satisfy the candid reader, beyond all reasonable doubts, that no such fact ever existed, and that the prophecy there mentioned, never had the least allusion to such a fact.

It is worthy of remark, that the writer of the chapter under reference, sets out with an expressed design of giving a record of the generation, i.e. race, or pedigree of Jesus, and commences with father Abraham as a remote ancestor of Jesus! Is not this undeniable fact, a proof quite as undeniable, that Jesus was the *natural* descendant of Abraham, and the immediate off-spring of Joseph? or at least, that the writer thought so, and intended so to be understood? Why did he trace the genealogy of Joseph back to Abraham, or rather follow Abraham's descendants down to Joseph, through forty two generations, if he did not consider Joseph the *natural* father of Jesus? The genealogy of any other person would have comported quite as well with the expressed design of the writer in the onset of the chapter, as that of Joseph could, unless his design was, as expressed, to have Jesus understood to be the natural descendant of Abraham. The reader cannot but discover the truth of this reasoning, and therefore I need not make its conclusion more obvious.

It is true, we are told in this chapter, that "Mary was found with child of the Holy Ghost." To know that she was with child, was no fact beyond the ordinary skill of man to discover; but to know that the child had been miraculously conceived, was a fact which never could have been made known to man, except by *supernatural* agency. It seems that Joseph discovered the former fact, and began to think about putting her away privately; "but while he thought on these things," it was told him that

Mary's child was of the Holy Ghost, and he ought not to be afraid of taking her for his wife. Here then, seems to have been the origin of the idea suggested to Joseph. But how was it suggested? Was there any thing supernaturally communicated? Did the Almighty Governor of the Universe use any extraordinary measures to communicate information, that such was the fact—that Mary had actually conceived while yet a virgin? Did he commission an angel to talk with Joseph upon the subject? No, reader, nothing of the kind. Joseph only *dreamed* that an angel told him so. An angel did not tell him so in reality; nor did the Almighty ever communicate with Joseph, or any other person, either directly or indirectly, respecting it. And the most that the book says, is, that Joseph got all his information from his dream, and while he was sleeping; for after he got it, he "rose up from his sleep," as appears by verse 24, of this chapter. The importance which any one attaches to his own dreams may be attached to Joseph's; but no more. It is not very probable, that Joseph had any better faculty of dreaming than people in our own days. For myself, I place but little confidence in my own dreams, and certainly I should be a fool to consider those of others as of much consequence. Under the then existing circumstances, it was not at all surprising that Joseph should have had such a dream; for at that time, he being espoused to Mary, that is, "engaged to her," according to the language of our own day, and about to be married, she was the object of his continual thoughts, and the discovery of her pregnancy, no doubt, added much to his meditations. Night and day the vision flitter before him, and possessed both his waking and sleeping



hours. All who have ever experienced any thing like the impressions of beauty, or the anguish of love, will readily testify how natural and frequent, dreams of a similar character are to themselves. Have they not seen the object of their affections standing before them in all the loveliness and realities of life, guarded by others no less visible and real, and, perhaps, by angels to witness the happy consummation of their anxious wishes? Tell me not, reader, that Joseph was so much of a stoic, so insensible to the impressions of beauty, so destitute of all the emotions of love natural to the human heart, (for it will not be denied that Joseph was *human*) as to forget all that had pleased his fancy during the day, the moment his head reached his pillow.

But, says the half convicted reader, if Joseph's information was nothing more than a dream, the fact dreamed of is still proved to be true, by the prophecy which preceded it. The prophecy said, "Behold a virgin shall be with child, &c." and the chapter says, Mary was with child "of the Holy Ghost," that this prophecy "might be fulfilled."

But let me ask, *who* says Mary was thus miraculously pregnant, that this prophecy "might be fulfilled?" Certainly the book does not represent Joseph as having been told so by the angel, of whom he dreamed, nor even that Joseph dreamed so at all? Nor is it plausible to believe, the writer who had just given Jesus' genealogy in the preceding verses, and represented him as the descendant of Abraham, could have said it; for it is a most palpable denial of that genealogy, and of the fact asserted in the first verse, viz. that Jesus was "the son of David, the son, [i. e. the descendant] of Abraham." Then who has said it? The reader must

discover, even in this early stage of our inquiry, that a fraud exists somewhere, and as we progress, he will discover that it is not the only one connected with our subject. Of the origin of the first one, however, I shall not undertake to do more at this time, than barely to give my opinion respecting it, and the reason on which I ground it. It is this:—

The last eight verses of this chapter, have been interpolated. The object of interpolating them was, to prove Jesus to be the real Messiah, whom the Jews had been expecting, and in this way to oppose those, who dissented from the doctrines taught by Jesus more successfully. To add weight to such an account of his conception, and give it the appearance of truth, the words of a prophecy were made use of, and twisted into an application, which even at this day, could not be disproved, if the same obstacles existed now, which existed in former times, when the deception was first contrived. For consider, then a few copies only of the writings of Isaiah, from which the prophecy was taken, were in the possession of the world, and *all* were in manuscripts. Under such circumstances, the great body of the people were ignorant of letters, and consequently inclined, because taught, to be credulous, and had it not in their power to know under what circumstances the prophecy was made, to what it had reference, or any thing concerning it, beyond what it communicated, and what they were told concerning its application to Mary's circumstances, and Jesus' birth. Such being the case, one can easily conceive, that no great difficulty would be encountered, in establishing the miraculous conception of Christ in the minds of the people, backed up as it was, by a prophecy which could not be dis-

proved, if any had doubts or a disposition to doubt respecting it. But, at the present day, circumstances are different, and all may now read, reason, and judge for themselves with almost equal advantages. Isaiah's writings are in the hands of almost every individual, and almost every individual is able to trace the prophecy, and unravel its true meaning and relations, if they will but take the trouble. And, in doing it, they will discover, that generation after generation have been made the dupes of artifice, and the tools of knaves. The worst of knavery, the most flagitious impiety, is that which knowingly misleads the ignorant respecting the character of their God. Atheism is better, is more safe than polytheism, as much as it is better and more safe for a blind man to stand still, than to walk without a proper guide. If the doctrines of Jesus, have not merits enough, enough of inherent goodness, to stand without being identified with Jesus, then they are too weak to benefit mankind. If they are not sufficiently analagous to the works and principles pervading the works of Deity, to confirm their divinity and usefulness, and without the aid of fraud and deception, and priestcraft, then ambition is justified in disregarding them in its pursuits for something more excellent and useful. The laws of God, and the duties of man, when discovered, will not need the assistance of craft, or subtlety, to make them understood by the world. Force, to a certain extent, may be necessary to secure their observance; but on the great body of the human family, nothing like force will be necessary to secure them respect. Reason, implanted by God in the heart of man, and love, swelling within his bosom in flames which reason kindles, will

ever be sufficient for their protection and support. Give them but such aid, and they will never call on Deity for his special interference, nor for virgin mothers, or deified sons. But to our subject.

As my limits at this time will not permit me to lay all which I have to say respecting the chapter under reference, I will engage to satisfy the reader, in another paper, that the prophecy therein mentioned had never the remotest allusion to Jesus, and that Mary was neither a virgin, or her son miraculously conceived, and this by proving, in addition to what has already been shown, 1st, the meaning and allusion of the prophecy; 2dly, by Mary's own declarations; 3dly, by the representations of other New Testament writers, and 4thly, by, "circumstances strong as holy writ."

SUSAN.

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THE ORIGIN OF CHRISTIANITY; OR,  
TRUTH DRAWN FROM FABLES.

CHAPTER III.

On the Apocalypse.

The Apocalypse, is the most curious and precious book of the Christian religion. It contains the whole detail of the initiation to the mysteries of the Lamb; and its intelligence, which had baffled all attempts of the most learned men till Dupuis unfolded its true meaning, affords an additional confirmation of his doctrine on the real nature of the dogmas of Christianity, and is a further illustration of what we have exposed in our former chapters.

To understand thoroughly this subject, it is necessary to know something concerning the mysteries or initiations of the ancient religions, in which the candidates, after a number of trials, and under the most solemn engagements of not divulging



the secret doctrines that were communicated to them by the prophet, Hierophant, or chief of the initiation, were admitted to the high rank of adepts. The object of all these mysteries was, to inculcate a certain doctrine or religious dogma. In those of Eleusis, imitated from the Egyptian ceremonies practised previous to the placing of the dead bodies in the catacombs, the main object was to teach the doctrine of a future life, and that of an Elysium for the virtuous, and of dark abodes for the wicked. In other initiations, different dogmas were taught, but in all of them the adept only became acquainted with the secret doctrine through a variety of images and scenes, which were in succession offered to his view; some of which were intended as mere emblematic representations, while others were destined to produce a strong impression on the senses, and to strike the mind with terror, or to allure it by the most seducing imagery, giving the adept, as it were, a foretaste of future bliss in another life. Still, however, the adept, even after having obtained the knowledge of the secret dogmas, and an explanation of the language and emblems employed in the celebration of the mysteries, was far from acquiring a perfect knowledge of the real origin of the emblematic language, characters, and figures, and the primitive signification of them; for the mysteries were the work of priests, and priests never disclose the whole truth, even when they know it, on religious subjects. This was particularly the case in those initiations in which a moral or mystical doctrine was taught, as in the Eleusiniar mysteries and in those of Osiris, when in the course of time, a metaphysical sense was given to things and signs, which were at first only intended to express phy-

sical notions of the planetary bodies and the powers of the universe. Thus, instead of the Sun and planets, and the different elements, abstract properties were converted into real beings, and a body was given to the fancied dreams of man, who thus modeled all nature after himself, and supposed all active forces of the universe to be endowed with an intelligence like his own, and with passions like himself. In this system, the Sun, the planets, and the stars, were not worshipped as celestial bodies, but as being the residence of intelligences superior to man, and dwelling in the different parts of nature, as the soul inhabited the body of man, according to the spiritualists. It was thus that Astronomy, at first clothed in figurative language, but expressing real facts and appearances, became, from actual observations, carried on during very long periods of time, mere Astrology, in which the celestial phenomena were made subservient to divination, and were principally attended to, in order to enable deluded men or impostors to foretell the future destinies of man, and of the globe. It is, however, to the credulity of past ages, and to the prevalent influence of Astrology, that we stand indebted for the greater part of the knowledge we possess of ancient Astronomy, and for the documents that enable us to explain the ground work of ancient religions, and to trace them all to the worship of the planetary bodies, and the powers of nature, and particularly of the Sun and Moon.

The very curious book we are going now to examine, contains a detail of the initiation to the mysteries of the Lamb, or of the Sun triumphing in the sign of Aries, and there exalted, brilliant, full of light, glory, and power, after having overcome the malignant principle of dark-

ness. The mysteries of the Lamb, being connected with some parts of Ezekiel, Daniel, and other Jewish mystic visions, and being intended to inspire terror by the picture of the punishments to which the world will be subjected, and to afford the delusive, but cheering prospect of a better life, the whole is blended together so as to mark the real meaning of the figurative language and emblamatic symbols, which are offered to the candidate on his initiation. The author intended either to describe the real ceremonies performed in one of those initiations of the Lamb, out of which the Christian religion sprung; or he undertook to characterize its dogmas after the manner of other religious initiations. In either of these suppositions, it is clear he wrote his account of the Christian mysteries, couched in such language that the adepts alone might be able to understand the true meaning and aim of the symbolic visions of the sect; and although the figures and language are in many places quite plain, still they have been constantly misunderstood, precisely because a concealed signification was gratuitously supposed to pervade the whole book, but quite different from that of the symbolical or hieroglyphical language adopted in all the other initiations, and in every one of them built on purely astronomical emblems. Thus, overlooking the evident similitude between the Lamb of the Christians and that of the Persians, and the identity of both with the Aries of the Constellations, all those who, previous to Dupuis, have attempted to explain the Apocalypse, have bewildered themselves and their readers, by the fruitless efforts they have made to find out in that book any other sense, but the only one which it bears. They have all failed, for they all presumed to read

without having first a knowledge of the key, indispensable to the understanding of that peculiar language. Newton and Bossuet, after having laboured in vain to decypher the Apocalypse, have certainly lost a considerable part of their reputation by their pitiful attempts made upon false data, and as false hypothesis.

The Magi, or disciples of Zoroaster, maintained that there exist two principles, one presiding over light and good, and the other the friend of darkness and evil. The former they called Oromaze, or Ormuzd, and the latter Ahriman, each having under him secondary angels or genii, with their followers or dependants, waging continual warfare against one another, and being in succession triumphant, and subdued; but they held, that, at last, Ahriman and his followers would be vanquished by the principle of light, who would obtain a final triumph. When that time shall come, say the Magi, then shall all the good Genii with their followers, return to their source, and remain in the empire of light; while the dark and evil Genii shall be driven into abodes of darkness, from which they arose. "A time will then come," says Theopompus, "when Ahriman, after having brought on the world pestilence and famine, shall be entirely destroyed. The globe will then become quite smooth and even, and will be the abode of blessed men, all living under the same laws, and possessing transparent bodies. Then will they enjoy an inalterable bliss under the empire of Ormuzd or God of Light."

On perusing the Apocalypse with attention, we shall be convinced that it is on such a theological dogma that the whole structure is built. All the mysterious details superadded, serve only to support this fundamental belief, which is converted into a drama,

performed at the Mysteries of Ormuzd, or of light triumphant over darkness. All the theatrical and fairy scenery is borrowed from images drawn in the heavens, or taken from the constellations that preside over the course of time, and adorn the visible world, out of the ruins of which the magic wand of the priest promises to raise a new luminous world, or the holy city, the celestial Jerusalem, for the abode of the adepts or initiated. "In the midst of night, (says the initiated) in the mysteries of Isis, the sun appeared to me shining with the brightest light, and after having trod the threshold of Proserpine, and traversed all the elements, I found myself in the presence of the Gods."

(To be continued.)

For the Correspondent.

For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight;  
His can't be wrong whose life is in the right.  
In faith and hope the world will disagree,  
But all mankind's concern is charity;  
All must be false that thwart this one great end;  
And all of God that bless mankind or mend.

Pope.

That every individual has by nature a right to the free expression of opinion, in every possible manner, no one we presume will openly deny; and it is a blessing peculiar to our own country, that the laws guarantee to its citizens the full enjoyment of that right. It is a boon for which the heroes of the revolution fought and bled, and which the illustrious framers of our constitution thought of the first importance to the existence and perpetuity of their dearly bought independence. How dangerous, then, to this truly republican principle, must be a religion which inculcates a doctrine in direct opposition to it—a religion which charitably consigns all who do not, who cannot believe in its incomprehensible mysteries, to eternal torment!

though their disbelief is the natural consequence of the exercise of the noblest faculty of man,—his reason. Yet such is the Christian religion, and such are the principles which actuate its professors.

Did Christians confine themselves to the mere threat of punishment and torture (for involuntary crime) in a *future* state, the effect would be perfectly harmless to the disciples of nature and reason, and would only be injurious as tending to perpetuate error. This, however, is not the case. It is the nature of their religion to view all difference of opinion as criminal, and under this delusion they are constantly persecuting, as far as is consistent with their own security, not only those who are convinced of the fallacy of their obscure system, but each other. Such, indeed, is the effect of this persecuting spirit, in some sections of our country, that many are deterred by it from expressing their real sentiments, through motives of self-defence, and are thus compelled to resort to a species of hypocrisy, though perhaps to save themselves and families from ruin. The priesthood are particularly zealous in propagating this uncharitable feeling among their respective followers; thus striking at the foundation of morality, undermining the chief pillar of our constitution, and setting at defiance a moral precept which they *profess* to respect—*do as you would be done by*. Faith (i. e. a blind credulity in every thing contained in the Bible, with such constructions as the whim, caprice, perverted judgment, or interested motives of its self-constituted expositors may dictate) is the corner stone of the temple of Christianity; that removed, and the whole fabric must fall. The conclusion to be deduced from these reflections, we think, is plain: the existence of



Christianity depends on the suppression of free inquiry; and that priestly influence has been and will be steadily and secretly exerted to effect this object, the history of past ages and daily observation have fully demonstrated.

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## The Correspondent.

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*Magna est Veritas et Prevalebit.*

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NEW-YORK, MAY 12, 1827.

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### LECTURES DELIVERED AT THE FREE PRESS ASSOCIATION.

On the Inconsistencies, Contradictions, and Absurdities of the Bible.—By the Secretary.

(Continued from our last.)

Of all people on the earth, the Jews seem to have been the most guilty of imposing on the world an opinion of their antiquity, and exalting their race above all other nations. This error the Christians have adopted, because it is essential to the existence of their system, and whoever attempts to expose the deception, are denominated infidels and atheists. They obtrude their own errors as the standard of truth, and reject, as fabulous, whatever contradicts these. Having resolved to admit of no chronology which exceeds the limits of their own, they annihilate whole ages with the dash of a pen, and reduce the indefinite measure of past time to a span.—They esteem the orientals as fools, easily imposed on by their crafty priests; and all their sacred records they regard as fables, and the dreams of poets. If the Christian priesthood judge by their own conduct, I am willing to allow them credit for the fidelity of this picture when applied to themselves. But I cannot concede the fact, acknowledged by historians of the greatest credit, that it has been from the East all know-

ledge has been derived, whether by the Greeks, by the Romans, or by more modern nations. As to the Jews, nothing but an incorrigible blindness and perverse bigotry can lead any man in his senses to place reliance on their writings. It is established beyond all doubt, that they were the most illiterate and barbarous race that ever existed; totally unacquainted with literature, ignorant of science, and entirely occupied with the observance of frivolous unmeaning ceremonies of religion. Appolonius said of them, that they "were the most trifling of all the barbarians, and the only people who had never found out any thing useful for life," and Lactantius, that they "were never visited by the learned men of other countries, because they were never famous for literature." St. Cyril of Alexandria says, that Moses did not attempt to philosophize with the Jews, because they were "grossly ignorant," and almost to a proverb, addicted to idolatry. Dr. Burnet, author of the *Theory of the Earth*, in vindicating Moses for not communicating his knowledge to the Jews, thus expresses himself in his *Archæologiæ Philosophicæ*: "We ought to consider the *dull and heavy disposition* of the children of Israel at the time when Moses wrote his laws, and account of the original of things. We may well suppose from the Jewish laws and Mosaical economy, that the people were of a *gross and sluggish nature*; nor were they qualified for the contemplation of natural things, or the perception of divine ones.—And, therefore, Moses has interwoven nothing in his institutions of an *intellectual nature*; in those rewards and punishments which he has proposed to strengthen his laws, he goes no farther than the bounds of this life, promising nothing but the tem-

poral good things of it, nor threatening any evils but those of the same nature. And this method of proceeding was occasioned, not by his own ignorance, but *by the incapacity of the people, and the grossness of their minds.*" Burnet very correctly attributes this ignorance and grossness of the Jews, which lowered them below all other nations, to their long captivity and degraded condition while in Egypt; "having, (he says) endured above 400 years servitude, which not only *depraved their manners and discipline, but almost bereaved them of humanity.* If I may speak the truth, (continues the Dr.) without raising envy, they were a *vile company of men—an assembly of slaves, brought out of Egyptian prisons, who understood no art but that of making bricks.*" Even their own historian, Josephus, admits that his countrymen were so illiterate as never to have written any thing, or to have held intercourse with their learned neighbours.

If, then, the Jews did not, and could not, at any period of their history, apply themselves to the cultivation of their minds, or to acquiring a knowledge of the arts and sciences, on what principle is it that we are called to give credit to their pretended accounts of the duration of the world? By what rule of logic is it demonstrated, that a people confessedly rude and unpolished, gross and sluggish in their minds, depraved in their manners and discipline, bereaved of humanity, and who understood no art but that of making bricks, should be looked up to, and acknowledged as the instructors of nations on any point connected with history or philosophy? Supposing that, in a century hence, an aborigine of America should write a history of his country; and, in giving an account of its settlement by Euro-

peans, should assert that they acquired all the knowledge from their neighbours the Indians, by which they were enabled to lay out cities, erect public edifices, promote the arts and sciences, and the advancement of learning; would not this be regarded as the climax of absurdity? Would not the individual who indulged in such ridiculous inventions, be held an unfit associate for rational men? Now, there can be no comparison between the intellectual powers of the aborigines of our country, and the inhabitants of Judea, as the former are well known to surpass the latter in almost every sense of the word. Nor can those stupendous monuments of Egypt and Babylon, of the existence of which so many entire specimens now remain, be at all placed in competition with the fragile and temporary buildings of modern times. If those who employ themselves in endeavouring to exalt the Jews above all other nations, and to make their books appear superior to those of the great philosophers of antiquity, cannot employ themselves better than in speculations of this nature, the sooner mankind convert the world into one huge assylum for fanatics, the happier will it be for them.

I recently had an opportunity of showing by evidence drawn from the Jewish books themselves, that no part of them was written by their supposed legislator Moses, but that they were the productions of priestcraft *after* the return from Babylon, where the Jews were captives for 70 years, and, during which, so far from having any pretensions to literature, it is acknowledged that they had almost forgotten the use of their own language. The fact is, as I shall be able to show in the course of these lectures, the history of the creation of the world, of the formation of

man, of paradise, of the fall, and of all the other marvellous circumstances contained in the four first chapters of Genesis, are a mere adaptation of the accounts to be found in the writings of the Orientals, with which the few who applied themselves to study among the Jews had access, when captives to the Assyrians. A singular piece of evidence tending to confirm this fact, has lately been furnished by a Dr. Jones, who only a few months ago, published, in London, a "History of Wales, descriptive of the wars, manners, religion, laws, druids, bards, pedigrees, and language of the ancient Britons and modern Welsh." After refuting, in chapter 4th, some accounts which had previously been published respecting the introduction of the Christian religion into Britain, the Dr. observes—"The true history seems to be, that the principles of Christianity were imported from Alexandria into Britain about the middle of the third century, and in the reign of Coel Godebog, the grandfather of Constantine the Great. It is presumed, that the adventures and doctrines of Jesus Christ, as topics of literature, were composed under various titles, in different languages, and finally rendered into Greek, at Alexandria, the asylum of Grecian philosophy and Asiatic learning, under various titles; such as, *Memoirs of the Apostles*, as quoted by Justin Martyr; a great number of *Gospels*, &c. in different languages; for the twelve apostles consisted of Gallileans, who spoke a kind of Asiatic Gallic; Roman publicans, who spoke Latin; Simon Zelotes, a Canaanite, or Phœnician; and Judas Iscariot, the only Jew of the twelve, and whose oral language was the Syriac. These adventures and doctrines soon fell into the hands of the electric philosophers, at Alex-

andria; for it was a custom in Egypt to seize all books imported into that country. The books so seized [now mark the words] were transcribed by copyists; the copies were delivered to the proprietors, and the originals were deposited in the Alexandrian library. It may be remarked, *in transitu*, that these officious transcribers sometimes prefixed, affixed, and interpolated: thus, when the Komesh (i. e. the five books) of Moses was transcribed, *the copy returned had the cosmology of the Egyptians prefixed, which forms the first four chapters of Genesis*; whereas, the *Mikra*, and the *Targummim*, (Jewish versions of the five books) in ancient times, *commenced with the present fifth chapter of that roll, or volumen*. From this grand magazine of erudition, at Alexandria, the principles of Christianity were imported by the traders to Cassiterides; the ancient Britons embraced them; and Godebog, king of Britain, was called Coel, *the believer*; and is distinguished in history by the name of Coel Godebog. This conclusion stands supported by an argument *per se*; for it is certain that Christianity, in its early ages, was distinguished into Asiatic and Alexandrine doctrines."

We thus see that the first Christian priests, who were composed of Greeks, reformed Jews, and Phœnicians, felt no hesitation in corrupting, and adding to, the books of the old testament as well as those of the new. In my next, I shall show, by extracts from oriental writers, relative to the appearance of the earth, immediately after it was brought into existence, as described in the first chapter of Genises, that the opinion advanced by Dr. Jones, is not merely conjectural, but founded on the clearest and most unexceptionable evidence.



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**MISCELLANY.**


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The "Old Creation of the World new revived" seems to have been formerly very popular, as the following bill will show :

BY HER MAJESTY'S PERMISSION.

"At Heatly's Booth, over against the Cross Daggers, next Mr. Miller's booth; during the time of Bartholomew Fair, will be presented a little opera, catled 'the Old Creation of the World, newly revived,' with the addition of the glorious battle obtained over the French and Spaniards, by His Grace the Duke of Marlborough.

"The Contents are these,—1. The Creation of Adam and Eve.—2. The Intreagues of Lucifer in the garden of Eden.—3. Adam and Eve driven out of Paradise.—4. Cain going to plough, Abel driving sheep. 5. Cain killeth his brother Abel.—6. Abraham offering his son Isaac.—7. Three wise men of the East guided by a star, who worshiped him.—8. Joseph and Mary flee away by night upon an ass.—9. King Herod's cruelty, his men's spears laden with children.—10. Rich Dives invites his friends, and orders his porter to keep the beggars from his gate.—11. Poor Lazarus comes a begging at Rich Dive's gate, the dogs lick his sores.—12. The Good Angel and death contends for Lazarus' life.—Rich Dives is taken sick and dieth, and is buried in great solemnity.—14. Rich Dives in Hell, and Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, seen in a most glorious object, all in machines descending in a throne, guarded with multitudes of Angels, with the breaking of the clouds, discovering the Palace of the Sun, in double and treble prospects, to the admiration of all spectators. Likewise several rich and large figures, which dances

jigs, sarabands, antics, and country dances, between every act; compleated with merry humours of Sir John Spendall and Punchanello, with several other things never yet exposed. Performed by Mat Heatly. Vivat Regina."

*Devil's Sonata.*—M. de Lalande states that he received from Tartini himself (the celebrated composer) the following singular anecdote respecting one of his compositions, which shows to what a degree his imagination was inflamed:—He dreamed one night that he had made a compact with the devil, who promised to be at his service on all occasions; and during this vision, every thing succeeded to his mind; his wishes were prevented, and his desires always surpassed by the assistance of his new servant. In short, he imagined that he presented the devil his violin, in order to discover what kind of musician he was, when, to his great astonishment, he heard him play a solo so singularly beautiful, and executed with such superior taste and precision, that it surpassed all the music he had ever heard or conceived in life. So great was his surprise, and so exquisite his delight upon this occasion, that it deprived him of the power of breathing. He awoke with the violence of his sensations, and instantly seized his fiddle, in hopes of expressing what he had just heard, but in vain. He however directly composed a piece, which is perhaps the best of all his works, and called it the Devil's Sonata! He knew it, however, to be so inferior to what his sleep had produced, that he would have broken his instrument, and abandoned music forever, if he could have subsisted by any other means.

*Singular derivation.*—Eulogy, in church history, a name by which the

Greeks call the *panis benedictus*, or bread over which a blessing is pronounced, and which is distributed to those who are unqualified to communicate. The name *eulogia* was anciently given to the consecrated pieces of bread, which the bishops and priests sent to each other, for the keeping up a friendly correspondence: those presents likewise which were made out of respect or obligation were called *eulogia*. St. Paulinus, bishop of Nola, about the end of the sixth century, having sent five *eulogia* at one time to Romanian, says, "I send you five pieces of bread, the *ammunition of the warfare of Jesus Christ*, under whose standard we fight." Eulogy means likewise an encomium on any person, on account of some virtue or good quality.

*The Psalms.*—Notwithstanding the general title given to "The Psalms of David," he was by no means the author of the whole hundred and fifty. By the Hebrews, the Book of Psalms is called *sfr athlin* (*liber laudum*;) and the learned are of opinion, that David composed only about a third of the number. The rest are ascribed to Moses, and other sacred authors—fifty-one of the Psalms being anonymous. King Ezekial passes for the first collector of the Psalms. After the Babylonian captivity, they were again collected by Nehemiah.

*Prejudice.*—Prejudice may be considered as a continual false medium of viewing things; for prejudiced persons not only never speak well, but also never think well, of those whom they dislike; and the whole character or conduct is considered with an eye to that particular thing which offends them.

The "feast of fools" and "feast of asses," originated with the Greek church about the year 990, with oth-

er religious farces, and were subsequently followed by the Latins.

#### EXTRACTS FROM THE CABINET OF ANCIENT WISDOM.

They who educate children well, are more to be honored than they who produce them; for these only gave them life, those the art of living well.—*Aristotle*.

We ought to teach children that which will be most useful to them when they become men.—*Agesilaus*.

The young should learn what they ought to practice when they arrive at maturity.—*Aristippus*.

We should be always learning.—*Solon*.

That learning is most requisite which unlearns evil.—*Antisthenes*.

Learning teaches youth temperance, affords comfort to old age, gives riches to the poor, and is an ornament to the rich.—*Diogenes*.

The eye receives light from the firmament, the soul from learning.—*Aristotle*.

The learned differ as much from the ignorant, as the living from the dead.—*Ib*.

Learning is an ornament in prosperity, a refuge in adversity; and the best provision against old age.—*Ib*.

Virtue is perfect happiness, and requires no other aid than Socratic strength.—*Antisthenes*.

A wise man is not governed by the laws and ordinances of men, but is guided by the rule of virtue.—*Ib*.

Those who possess virtue, possess also nobility.—*Ib*.

Virtue is the beauty, vice the deformity of the soul.—*Socrates*.

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